



State-civil society relations in South Africa

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Abstract

Two quotations, two very different vision of post-apartheid state-civil society relations. The articulators of these dreams have as their objective the strengthening of, and benefit conveyance to, poor people. The two people are situated in various institutional settings. The first is a bureau serve in charge of the Department of Social Development. The second is a common society dissident, one among numerous pioneers in the new and rising city battles that are testing nearby governments in their inconvenience of a cost-recuperation worldview to the arrangement of social administrations. Which vision is fitting for the states of post-politically-sanctioned racial segregation South Africa?

The two citations reflect no less than one component of our post-politically-sanctioned racial segregation reality. In any case, the outright and category character of their dreams make them improper models for a contemporary state-common society relationship. Certainly these dreams envision a homogenous common society. They anticipate a solitary arrangement of relations for the entire of common society. Is respectful society, be that as it may, not plural by it's extremely nature? What's more, ought not this majority to implant our understandings of state-common society relations in contemporary South Africa?.

Keywords: state-civil society relations in post-apartheid South Africa. This article takes as its departure point a definition of civil society that celebrates its plurality. Some relationships between civil society actors and state institutions will be adversarial and conflictual.

Introduction

Two particular stages check the advancement of contemporary common society in South Africa. Before recognizing these, it might be valuable to take note of that contemporary common society is recognized by the way that it not just mirrors the statistic substances of South African culture, yet additionally rises above the racialized type of the antagonistic cooperative polarity that exemplified common society relations with the state in prior ages. Regardless, the various racial profile of contemporary common society has its foundations in the mid-1980s when an amazing development in associational life in this nation happened. Without a doubt, the particular component of this period isn't just the longitudinal development of the segment, yet the formal rise, or if nothing else the surfacing in the political circle of a huge piece of it, to be specific dark common society performers who had until now been prohibited or kept from working in people in general field. The second stage dates to 1994, when the character and activities of a critical piece of the common society, by and by hostile to politically-sanctioned racial segregation dark urban performers, in a general sense changed because of new openings and difficulties. The two periods obviously conveniently agree with enter minutes in the advancement of the political framework: the first with the progression stage, and the second with the democratization period of the change. Common society has in this manner affected and been formed by the political change in South Africa.

Preceding the progression in the mid-1980s, the prevailing components in common society were associations and

organizations that were either professional politically-sanctioned racial segregation or expert business. Organizations incredulous of the state and the financial framework were effectively stifled or underestimated from the formal political process. The major political challenge inside common society appeared to be between ace politically-sanctioned racial segregation foundations like the Broederbond and Nederlaandse Gereformede Kerk (NGK) and liberal arranged associations, for example, the Institute of Race Relations and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). As the 1970s approached, anti-apartheid non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the unions and the array of organizations associated with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) began to make their presence felt. Yet, steady badgering from the state and infinitesimal assets guaranteed that they truly filled in as a sideshow to the more formal challenge and commitment inside common society and between common society and the state.

This all changed in the 1980s. The anti-apartheid elements within civil society resurfaced and within a few years became the dominant element within the sector. Two developments underpinned this growth in anti-apartheid civil society organizations. The first was the liberalization of the political system unleashed by President P. W. Botha's government in the early 1980s. This involved reform of the cruder aspects of grand apartheid, the attempted political co-optation of some sections of the disenfranchised communities, and allowing the emergence of some civic activity within, and representation of, the black population. It is indeed ironic that credit for

facilitating the reemergence of civil society, the agencies responsible for the destruction of apartheid, should go to the one of South Africa's most authoritarian political leaders. But such are the quirks of history.

In any case, the reform of the political system in the early 1980s enabled the reemergence of anti-apartheid civil society. The Soweto revolt in 1976 and the more general upsurge in protest (including union activity throughout the 1970s) created a struggle between reformers and conservatives within the heart of the state. The former wanted to reform apartheid, make it compatible with the modernizing imperatives of the economy, and co-opt some elements of the black population by giving them a stake in the system. The latter wanted a recommitment to the traditional project of grand apartheid. The success of P. W. Botha and his reformist coalition in the leadership succession dispute of the National Party in the late 1970s created the opportunity for the promulgation of the reformist project. A series of institutional reforms followed, a significant component of which included the recognition and legalization of independent black unions and the establishment of a political space that permitted the reemergence of anti-apartheid civil society. Moreover, the state provided the rationale for mobilizing this sector by proposing a reform that attempted to co-opt some, and marginalize other elements of the black community. Anti-apartheid civil society was thus enabled by and provided the rationale for mobilization by the state's liberalization initiative.

Not this entire scenario was positive. In fact, very soon into the reform program the state began actively to repress elements within the anti-apartheid camp. But despite this repression, which became quite severe under the states of emergency of the 1980s, anti-apartheid civil society retained its popular legitimacy. This enabled it to reemerge very quickly when F. W. de Klerk took over the leadership reins in a palace coup that replaced P. W. Botha as president, and reintroduced and even extended, the state's liberalization initiative. The ultimate result was that by the 1990s the anti-apartheid camp had become the dominant element in civil society.

The second advancement encouraging the reemergence of anti-apartheid common society was the expanding accessibility of assets to philanthropic on-screen characters in South Africa. Two kinds of assets are vital in such manner. The primary, HR, progressively ended up accessible in the mid-1980s as college understudies and graduates politicized by the exercises of the 1970s, and political detainees, a significant number of whom were discharged in the mid-1980s, met up in bunch of approaches to sort out group and political exercises as well as set up philanthropic foundations to help these mass battles. The second, monetary assets at first rose up out of private establishments and outside governments who were moved to act to a great extent because of the way that the June 16 revolt and its results advanced toward the TVs screens in the progressed industrialized world. The expanding rhythm of battle inside the nation, be that as it may, likewise steadily constrained nearby performing artists, especially organizations and houses of worship, to start to guarantee against politically-sanctioned racial segregation charitable movement in South Africa. This increasing availability of resources, both from foreign and domestic sources, established the second plank

that enabled the reemergence and growth of anti-apartheid civil society in South Africa.

Two points need to be underscored in this very brief and cursory history of the emergence of contemporary civil society. First, the historical overview provides support for two theories of social movements: political opportunity structure, and resource mobilization. The political opportunity structure theory emphasizes the opening of political opportunities in explanations of the rise of social movements and social struggle. Resource mobilization theories, on the other hand, explain the rise of social formations through a focus on resources and their availability to different social groups. The explanatory variables emphasized by both theories, then, are crucial to understanding the emergence of contemporary civil society.

The second point that needs to be stressed is that, despite the fact that the anti-apartheid civil society was born within the womb of the state's reform program, state-civil society relations tended to take an adversarial form throughout the 1980s. This was because the liberalization initiative was not democratic and enabling. Indeed, like all liberalization initiatives in transitional societies, it needs to be conceptualized in relative terms. Thus, anti-apartheid civil society maintained its distance from, and was treated with suspicion by, what was still an apartheid state. The legal environment, including the tax regime, while allowing anti-apartheid NGOs and community-based organizations to emerge, was nevertheless still hostile to their operations. Similarly, the political and security environment remained repressive and became even more so after states of emergency were declared in 1985 and 1986. This hostile environment ensured that state-civil society relations took an adversarial form in the first decade of the anti-apartheid civil society organizations. This was to change only in the middle of the second decade when South Africa entered the democratization phase of its political transition.

Civil Society in the Democratic Era

The first bloc, comprising formal NGOs, has largely been influenced by the political restructuring the democratic state undertook in order to create an enabling environment for civil society. Three initiatives were undertaken in this regard. First, the security environment was significantly reorganized. Repressive legislation was repealed and a political climate permitting public scrutiny and protest activity was established. This was in no way unqualified. Indeed, in the last 11 years there have been occasions when security officials and even some politicians reacted to legitimate scrutiny and protest in ways reminiscent of their predecessors. But any overall assessment would have to conclude that the security environment is far more enabling now than it has ever been in this country.

Second, the Post-Apartheid regime moved quickly to pass legislation and adopt practices to reorganize the political environment. Thus, a Non-Profit Act was passed that officially recognized civil society, created a system of voluntary registration for its constituents, and provided benefits and allowances in exchange for NGOs and community-based organizations undertaking proper accounting and providing audited statements to government.

A Directorate for Non-Profit Organizations was established in the Department of Social Welfare to coordinate the above processes. In addition, NEDLAC, the country's premier corporatist institution, was established with four chambers, the last of which was to cater for representation from civil society. Most important in creating a new political environment, however, was the state's willingness to partner with NGOs in the policy development and service delivery arenas. This opened up a whole new avenue of operations for NGOs and fundamentally transformed their relations with the state.

Third, an enabling fiscal environment was created to enable the financial sustainability of this sector. This was in part forced onto the state very early on in the transition as NGOs confronted a financial crunch when foreign donors redirected their funding away from civil society organizations to the state. Again, legislation was passed and institutions were established to facilitate a flow of resources to the sector. The 1978 Fundraising Act, which limited NGOs' capacity to raise funds, was repealed. Institutions like the National Development Agency (NDA) and the Lottery Commission were established with a mandate to fund legitimate nonprofit activity. And, a reform of the tax regulations was promulgated in 2000-2001 to grant registered civil society organizations tax-exempt status, and to encourage a philanthropic culture in the country.

In summary, the Post-Apartheid time has seen the "standardization" of South African culture in a neoliberal worldwide condition. Neediness, imbalance, and the specialist issues of minimization and administration that the Washington Consensus and the "third wave" model of globalization and vote based system have wreaked on different parts of the world are currently the signs of South African culture. What's more, polite society's reaction in South Africa to these advancements has been like that of the supposed third segment in different parts of the world. Because of the impacts and difficulties of democratization and globalization, it has reconstituted itself into three unmistakable coalitions: NGOs, casual survivalist offices, and social developments. This reconstitution of common society has encouraged the advancement of a majority of connections between common society and the Post-Apartheid state.

State, Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy

The three different blocs within civil society-NGOs, survivalist agencies, and social movements-that emerged in response to structural factors such as the democratization process and globalization's neoliberal manifestation in South Africa have very distinct relationships with the state. On the one end of the spectrum is a powerful set of formal service related NGOs that, as a result of the more enabling environment created by the democratic regime, have entered partnerships with or subcontracted to the state. These organizations have more engaged and collegiate relations with the state. On the other end of the spectrum is a group of community-based structures that actively challenge and oppose what they perceive as the implementation of neoliberalism. These organizations, whose activists covet the status of social movements, also have an explicit relationship with the state. This relationship, depending on the organization and the issue area, hovers somewhere between

adversarialism and engagement, and sometimes involves both. But even when engaging the state, this is of a qualitatively different kind to that of the formal NGOs. The latter has a relationship with the state that is largely defined by its sub contractual role; whereas the former is on a relatively more even footing, engaging the state in an attempt to persuade it through lobbying, court action, and even outright resistance.

Most activists, politicians, and government officials recognize this plurality of civil society, at least at the rhetorical level. But in most cases its meaning has not been internalized. Had it been, we would not have the constant demands from these actors, as is evident in the quotations at the beginning of this article, for a single homogenous set of relations between civil society and the state. For state officials, and the leadership and politicians of the ruling party, the most appropriate relationship between civil society and the state is one founded on collegiality. In this view, service-related NGOs that contract with the state and community organizations that partner with the ruling party are behaving in a manner conducive to democracy. The ruling party has gone out of its way to reward such behavior, mainly by providing access to corporatist institutions and other public participation channels established by the state.

In any case, now and again the state has interceded all the more forcefully, controlling its assets to profit a few and undermine other common society foundations. The most infamous instance of this is Eskom's discount of power unfulfilled obligations in Soweto. For this situation, the past priest of open ventures, Jeff Radebe, persuaded general society parasternal to discount power unfulfilled obligations in the township with an end goal to retire the SECC, which had been making progress by interfacing poor occupants who had been detached for inability to pay their late bills. Eskom formally arranged the discount with the South African National Civic Organization (SANCO), the national metro body authoritatively adjusted to the ANC, both to delegitimize the SECC and freely show the advantages of arrangement with the decision party. This unmitigated mishandle of open assets by the state to mediate and impact the result of an opposition between two city affiliations, while uncommon, does graphically exhibit what the state sees as a proper state-common society relationship, and the degree to which it would go to propel its model of state-city commitment.

But the state is not alone in wanting to advance a homogenous state-civil society agenda. Radical activists within civil society also advance a homogenous vision, except in their case the relationship should not be collegial, but rather adversarial. Of course, this is not a dominant view within civil society. Indeed, majority of activists, mainly located in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), TAC, and even SANCO, hold the view that the strategic priority of the contemporary era is to struggle for the soul of the ANC by remaining in partnership with it. At the same time, they believe they should retain the independence and organizational capacity to take to the streets when the need is required. But others, both activists and scholars, argue that a strategic partnership with the ruling party has the systemic effect of consolidating existing power relations. These, they maintain, enable state elites to be more responsive to the interests of black entrepreneurs and foreign and domestic

capital. The antidote to this state of affairs is to break civil association's partnership with the ruling party, reintroduce political uncertainty into the political system, and thereby make political representatives more responsive to the interests of poor and marginalized citizens.

Regardless, it should be noticed that a solitary homogenous arrangement of state-common society relations isn't helpful for the combination of majority rules system. Regardless of whether it is the state's perspective of university state-common society connections or the ill-disposed option of the radical activists, neither all alone would encourage the developing of vote based system. Without a doubt, it is just the majority of common society, and its resulting assorted variety of state-common society commitment, that is useful for vote based system and administration in the nation. The casual group based associations upgrade popular government at the easiest level since they empower customary individuals to survive. The foundation of more formal relations amongst them and the state would subvert their character and along these lines trade off this part. The more formal NGOs' community oriented association with the state is to a great extent a result of the administrations they render for the state. What's more, in a general public defied with monstrous accumulations and constrained institutional limit, this part must be to the advantage of majority rule government since it encourages and empowers benefit conveyance to normal subjects and occupants. At long last, the ill-disposed and conflictual part of new social developments and more formal group based associations upgrade majority rule government since they make a smoothness of help at the base of society. This must be helpful since it allows the reconfiguration of energy inside society, driving the state not to underestimate its subjects, and influencing a fundamental move to one side, which may make the likelihood for a more people-focused, Keynesian-arranged formative plan.

These diverse roles and functions undertaken by different elements of civil society collectively create the adversarial and collaborative relationships, the push and pull effects, that sometimes assist and other times compel the state to meet its obligations and responsibilities to its citizenry. The plurality of civil society and the diverse sets of relations that it engenders with the state are thus the best guarantees for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa.

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